

SECTION II

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INTRODUCTION

This subsection contains information and tables showing soils data that applies primarily to rangeland, grazed forestland, and native pastureland, and the use of those lands for grazing and forage production. The contents of this subsection may be contained within the published soil survey itself in the form of a written narrative on the use and management of the soils, and in the form of interpretations tables (e.g. table on “Rangeland Productivity and Characteristic Plant Communities”). Typical information presented by soil type includes range site, total annual production of vegetation in favorable, normal and unfavorable years, the characteristic vegetation, and the average percentage of each species.

In addition to the grazing and forage production information found in the soil survey, NRCS has divided rangeland into ecological sites for the purposes of inventory, evaluation, and management. In the former Soil Conservation Service, these were known as “range sites,” and were calibrated against a presumed climax condition or successional end point. Range sites were somewhat narrowly described and interpreted – i.e. they focused upon livestock grazing as the primary use of the site, and weren’t concerned with a wider array of ecological interpretations. Ecological sites incorporate the latest thinking and technology relative to how ecological processes function on rangeland, grazed forestlands, and pastureland in order to better manage these land for multiple purposes. Both range site descriptions and ecological site descriptions can be found in the “Ecological Site Descriptions” subsection of Section II.